

Message Text

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ACTION EB-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3700

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 3171

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS EAIR EAID PFOR ET US

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES, THE DIRG AND TWA: EMBASSY COMMENTS

REF: ADDIS 3028

EMBASSY OFFERS FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON OUTLOOK DESCRIBED REFTEL:

1. ASSUMING, AS WE DO, THAT TWA'S TOP MANAGEMENT WILL BE INCLINED TO PROCEED ON THE BASIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF ITS SENIOR ADVISER TO EAL FOR A RELATIVELY RAPID BUT ORDERLY PHASE-DOWN OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO AIRLINES, WE WOULD ANTICIPATE ON THE PART OF THE EPMG/DIRG A REACTION SOMEWHAT SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH FOLLOWED TENNECO'S DECISION TO CEASE ITS OPERATIONS IN ETHIOPIA. ALTHOUGH COL. SAMRAT MEDANE, EAL'S VERY COMPETENT GENERAL MANAGER, AND PERHAPS HIS CLOSEST ASSOCIATES WITHIN THE COMPANY, LIKELY WOULD CLEARLY UNDERSTAND TWA'S REASONS, WE COULD IMAGINE THAT THEY MIGHT FIND IT INOPPORTUNE TO CORRECT WHAT WE ANTICIPATE WOULD BE THE DIRG'S PERCEPTION: THAT TWA'S DECISION IS BASICALLY A FUNCTION OF THE COMPANY'S IDEOLOGICAL ANTIPATHY TO ETHIOPIAN SOCIALISM.

2. ALTHOUGH WE WOULD REGRET THE LOSS OF A VALUED AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THE SENSITIVE SECTOR OF ETHIOPIAN CIVIL AVIATION, THE CONCOMITANT THINNING OF THE COMMERCIAL/ECONOMIC STRAND OF

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THE ETHIOPIAN-AMERICAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP THIS WOULD

ENTAIL, AND SUCH A DIRG READING OF THE MOVE, WE CANNOT BUT
AGREE WITH THE REASONS AS SET FORTH (REFTEL) BY TWA'S SENIOR
ADVISER TO EAL.
WYMAN

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NNN

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